item which has appeared in a section of the press that there have been clashes in Siachen between Indian and Pakistani troops during the last week of September, 1987, resulting in heavy casualties;

(b) if so, what are "the details of the attack;

(c) what is the number of Indian Jawans injured and killed in these clashes; and

(d) whether any protest has been lodged written the Government of Pakistan; if so, what has been the reaction of that Government in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) and (b) During the last week of September, Pakistani forces, in a battalion strength, attacked our posts on the Saltoro ridge area of Siachen. The attacks were preceded by heavy concentration of artillery fire. The Pakistani troops also used rockets and missiles.

(c) There have been a few casual ties on our side. Pakistani troops are understood to have suffered heavy casualties. It would not be desirable to disclose details.

(d) No protest has been lodged with the Government of Pakistan in this regard.

Regional non-proliferation agreement

629. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE;

Will +he PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the statement reportedly made by the Pakistani Foreign Minister, inaugurating a conference on non-proliferation in South Asia in Islamabad on the 1st September, 1987, wherein he has pleaded for equality and non-discrimination *vis-a-vis* India in the nuclear field on the basis of regional non proliferation agreement;

(b) if so, what was the precise statement made by the Pak Foreign Minister; and

(c) what is the Government's reac tion thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The statement found wide publicity in our Press of the 2nd September. In effect, the then Pakistan Foreign Minister made some suggestions of a bilateral and regional nature on the issue of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia.

(c) Government are of the view that there can be no bilateral or regional solution to the dangers of nuclear proliferation. This is a global issue which can only be tackled globally. Moreover, the statement goes fit with Pakistan's single-minded drive for a nuclear-weapons capability.

Pak adapting F 16 for bomb delivery

630. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: W1I1 the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a report from. London, published in the 'Hindustan Times' dated October 3, 1987 captione "Pak adapting F-16 for bomb delivery" Quoting experts in Lonodn that 'Isla mabad has nearly completed a trans portable nuclear bomb' and is busy adap'ing one of the F-16 air-craft at Kamra West of Islamabad for th • delivery of its first nuclear bomb;

(b) if so, whether the report has since been confirmed; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): <a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government are aware of Pakistan's single minded drive to acquire a nuclear weapons capability. Government are keeping under constant review this as well as all other developments having a bearing on the country's security.

Indo US vaccine action programme

631. SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG: SHRI N. E. BALARAM:

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

DR. H. P. SHARMA;

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Indo-US vaccine project has been signed, by-passing the high power biotechnology scientific advisory committee set up by Government; if so, what are the details thereof;

(b) whether it is a fact lhat th-steps postulated in the agreement are likely to come in the way of setting up our own research and development laboratories and would have dangerou$_3$ impact. on the immunity pattern of Indians;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the data obtained by the United Slates can be used against thi; ? country would expose our country to ! cal warfare designs of our enemies;

(d) if so, what are the reasons for entering into such an agreement:

(e) whether some eminent Indian scientists etc. have demanded review of the agreerrtnt; and

(f) if so, what action Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS I OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRl'K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) The Indo-US Vaccine Action Programme (VAP) was signed on 9th July, 1987 after necessary an^ due examination, clearances and approvals by various concerned Departments and scientific agencies of the Government of India. The question of bypassing the Scientific Advisory Cornmittee of the Department of Biotechnology, therefore, does not arise.

(b) No Sir; the Indo-US VAP will not in an$_y$ manner in the way of indigenous research and development for new, safe and effective vaccines and immunodiagnostics. The VAP will b^ complementary to and supplement our own indigenous efforts for which already considerable steps have been taken by the Ministry of Health, the ICMR and the Ministry of Science & Technology. The programma will deal with diseases that are already prevalent as major diseases in th$_e$ country. *f* The work-programme under the VAP ^ would not have any undesirable im pact on the so-called immunity pattern of Indians.

(c) No Sir; the VAP is not expected in any way to he used against our country not to expose our country to biological warfare designs of our enemies.

(d) The main objectives for entering into the VAP was to evolve and implement a joint R&D programme with the best scientific specialist groups in US towards research and development of safe and efficacious vaccines against some of the major communicable diseases that presently take a large toll in India in terms of morbidity and mortality and for which, at the present time, effective and safe vaccines are not available. VAP would also